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Forty-sixth session
(Provisional Agenda item 4(f))

CO-OPERATION IN THE FIELD OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AND WATER RESOURCES AND IN THE FIELD OF LONG-RANGE TRANSBOUNDARY AIR POLLUTION

(Commission decision I (45))

Report by the Executive Secretary

1. In the light of paragraph 3 of decision I (45) the Senior Advisers on Environmental and Water Problems at their fourth session at the Ministerial level in Espoo (Finland) adopted the Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context (E/ECE/1250) and the accompanying Resolution (ECE/ENVWA/19). Representatives of 26 Governments and of the European Economic Community signed the Convention.

2. On 26 February 1991 the Espoo Ministerial Statement was adopted (ECE/ENVWA/18, paragraphs 10, 12 and Annex I). The statement emphasized in particular the reinforcement of the work of the Senior Advisers aiming at strengthening regional co-operation and co-ordination in the field of the environment.

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3. Pursuant to paragraph 2 of decision I (45) the Senior Advisers examined progress made in the elaboration of the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Water Courses and the Convention on the Transboundary Impacts of Industrial Accidents and urged the Working Party on Water Problems and the ad hoc Working Group, respectively, to take the necessary steps to finalize these draft Conventions for adoption by the Senior Advisers at their fifth session in 1992 (ECE/ENVWA/18, paragraphs 30 and 32).

4. The Working Group on Volatile Organic Compounds is expected to submit to the ninth session of the Executive Body for the Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution in 1991 a draft protocol concerning the Control of volatile organic compounds (paragraph 4 of decision I (45)).

5. At its ninth session, the Executive Body will consider a draft protocol, or an outline of such a protocol, prepared by the Working Group on Abatement Strategies, for further reduction of sulphur emissions after 1993, on the basis of critical loads, best available technology, energy savings and other considerations, including market-based economic instruments (paragraph 5 of decision I (45)).

6. Pursuant to paragraph 7 of decision I (45) the Senior Advisers completed work on the European Red List of Globally Threatened Animals and Plants and recommended adoption by the Commission at its forty-sixth session of a draft decision on the European Red List (ECE/ENVWA/18, paragraph 35 and Annex II).

7. The task force with Sweden as lead country to prepare a regional strategy on integrated waste management and the task force with the Netherlands as lead country on environmental product profiles made progress (paragraph 8 of decision I (45)), and will finalize their work in 1991 (ECE/ENVWA/18).

8. In the light of paragraph 9 of decision I (45) the Senior Advisers stressed the importance and significance of the environmental dimension of the Energy Efficiency 2000 campaign. They agreed that co-operation with the Committee on Energy should be enhanced in particular for the implementation of this campaign and invited delegations to arrange for the active participation of environmental experts in its work, and in particular in the work of the Steering Committee for the Project. They also emphasized the need for close co-operation between environment and energy experts at the secretariat level.

9. Following a recommendation by the Joint Working Group on Environment and Economics, the Senior Advisers adopted in their work programme activities aiming at promoting the integration of policies based on sustainable development into planning and decision-making and economic activities (ECE/ENVWA/18, Annex III, project element 05.1.1 on environment and economics).

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CO-OPERATION IN THE FIELD OF TRANSPORT

(Commission decision K (45))

Report by the Executive Secretary

1. This report has been prepared in response to paragraph 11 of decision K (45).

2. With regard to international legal instruments (including those mentioned in paragraphs 2, 6 and 9 of decision K (45)) progress was made towards the development of a coherent road transport system in Europe through the revision of the European Agreement concerning the Work of Crews engaged in the Road Transport (AETR) completed during the year and in the course of implementation. Work on the revision of the European instruments on road traffic and signs and signals has also been completed. The European Agreement on Important Combined Transport Lines and Related Infrastructure (AGTC) has been finalized and opened for signature as from April 1991. The revision of the 1954 and 1956 conventions on the temporary importation of private road vehicles has been completed and the substantive part of a new convention on customs treatment of pool containers has been elaborated.

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3. A Europe-wide "Road Safety Week" staged from 1-7 October 1990 together with the national campaigns organised in the member countries found a favourable response in the media and the population at large. Information has been received and is at present being compiled, concerning various initiatives taken at national and international level in support of the ECE Road Safety Week. The Committee agreed to convene a Seminar to analyse the results of the 1990 campaign and to prepare the basis for a further campaign in the near future (paragraphs 2 and 3 of decision K (45)).

4. In compliance with Committee resolution no.237 on Increasing Dimensions of Loading Units in Combined Transport, the secretariat has prepared a strategy for the execution of studies on this subject at a global level and prepared a progress report on their execution to allow the Committee to monitor and co-ordinate them. It has tentatively scheduled a (final) Seminar on the Impact of Increasing Dimensions of Loading Units on Combined Transport from 1 to 4 September 1992 to consider the results of the studies. This would allow the Committee to take a final decision on dimensions of loading units, including containers, at its fifty-fifth session in early 1993 (paragraph 2 of decision K (45)).

5. The Committee considered ways of reducing air pollution, in particular through the harmonization of national prescriptions regarding passenger cars and heavy duty vehicles. Special emphasis was laid on the need to reduce emissions and improve the control of vehicles in service, while reducing in the long term also the specific fuel consumption in relation to the problem of global warming (paragraph 5 of decision K (45)).

6. The implementation of ECE/UNDP transport infrastructure projects progressed satisfactorily. Under the Trans-European North-South Motorway Project (TEM) possibilities of obtaining international financing for motorway construction are being considered. The Trans-European North-South Railway Project (TER) has been launched and a Project Central Office was established in Budapest in October 1990. A consultative meeting on the Mediterranean Transport Development Project was held in October 1990 and a new project document has been drafted for transmission to interested countries.

7. The analysis of traffic flows on three important European North-South corridors has been finalized and a joint EEC/ECE project to investigate East-West traffic flows and infrastructure development needs has been launched. European traffic flows will be analysed at a seminar to be held in Volos (Greece) from 4 to 6 June 1991. It was agreed to strengthen relations between ECE and international financing institutions in order to promote investments for the development of transport in the central and eastern European region.

8. Activities relevant to the provisions of paragraphs 4 and 7 of decision K (45) include the following:

(a) The following main publications were issued in the course of the year: TIR Handbook; Proceedings of the 1989 Seminar on the impact of increasing dimensions of loading units on combined transport; Commentary on the Convention on civil liability for damage caused during carriage of dangerous goods by road, rail and inland navigation; Revised text of United Nations

Recommendations on the transport of dangerous goods; Revised text of the European Agreement concerning the international carriage of dangerous goods by road (ADR); Transport information 1990.

(b) The basis was established for the development of an EDI transport system covering the material elaborated in the framework of activities concerning, in a first stage, the transport of dangerous goods and the construction of vehicles.

(c) The first phase of a study on the harmonization and simplification of documentation and administrative procedures in road transport has been completed. The full study is expected to be finalized in the course of 1991.

(d) An all-European road traffic census based on ECE recommendations has been carried out in 1990 on the European E road network, the results of which will be published in the course of 1991.

9. The Committee at its fifty-second session in 1990 set up an informal group of High-Level Experts to consider the implications, for its work and organization, of recent political and economic developments in Europe as well as the growing concern about the environmental impact of transport. Bearing in mind the proposals of the Group and Commission decisions K (45) and O (45), the Committee at its fifty-third session reviewed the priority ranking of its activities and took decisions with regard to its structure, working methods and programme of work.

10. In respect of assistance to countries in transition initial steps were taken in relation to the organization of a number of workshops in the field of road, rail and inland water transport.